



DHS Office of Children, Youth and Families

One Smithfield Street, Suite 400

Pittsburgh, PA 15222-2221

412-350-5701, 412-350-4004 (fax)

Child Abuse Reporting Line (to report child abuse/neglect or receive information):
412-473-2000

ChildLine (State child abuse reporting line): 1-800-932-0313

Director's Action Line (for consumer concerns or complaints): 1-800-862-6783

Established in 1997—second largest child welfare agency in Pennsylvania

Administration

Patricia L. Valentine, DHS Executive Deputy Director for Integrated Program Services

Walter Howard Smith, Jr., Ph.D., DHS Deputy Director

Children and Youth Services Advisory Board

Pa. oversight: Pa. Department of Public Welfare, Office of Children, Youth, and Families

Mission

Protect children from abuse and neglect; to preserve families, whenever possible; and to assure permanency, that is, to provide permanent, safe homes for children either by assuring safety within the child's own family, or by finding an adoptive home or another permanent setting for those children who cannot be reunified with their family.

Legal Mandates

Complies with the following state laws/regulations requiring that child abuse and neglect be investigated and safe permanent homes be secured for dependent children:

- Juvenile Act (Act 333) and amendments
- Child Protective Services Law (Act 124) and amendments
- Pa. Adoption Act (Domestic Relations Title 23)
- Regulations governing county children and youth agencies
- Child protective services regulations

Also complies with all applicable federal legislation including the:

- Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997
- Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980
- Missing, Exploited and Runaway Children Protection Act
- Child Abuse Prevention and Enforcement Act
- Title – IV B, D, E
- Promoting Safe and Stable Families Amendments of 2001
- Chafee Foster Care Independence Act
- Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978
- Multi-ethnic Placement Act of 1994

Office of Children, Youth and Families Overview

Calls Logged 2013 total (families)

* **10,615** calls of suspected child abuse/neglect were received by CYF.

- 50% (5,292) were referred to community-based services.
- 50% (5,323) were assessed for child welfare services.
 - * 99.7% of these (5,308) were accepted for child welfare services.

People Served

- In CY 2013, 8,698 children and 8,673 parents received services.
- On January 1, 2014, 4,487 children were receiving services. 1,422 of these children were in out-of-home placement. 1,148 were in foster care. About half of those in out-of-home placement were placed with kin.

CYF filled positions (a/o 01/14)

- 519 (county)

Contract Providers (FY 2013-14)

138

Budget (FY 2013-14)

\$234.7 million (16.2% county; 60% state, 20.2% federal and 3.6% other funds)

Includes \$182.9 M for CYF, \$38.4 M for JPO and \$13.6 M for Shuman Juvenile Detention Center

79% of the total budget is distributed to contracted agencies.



Allegheny County

Department of Human Services

Marc Cherna, Director

Office of Children, Youth and Families

**Walter Howard Smith, Jr., Ph. D., DHS Deputy Director,
CYF**

**One Smithfield Street, Fourth Floor, Pittsburgh, PA 15222-2221
412-350-5701; 412-350-4004 (fax)**

Background

Allegheny County Department of Human Services, Office of Children, Youth and Families (formerly Children and Youth Services) is the County's public office mandated by law to protect children from abuse and neglect. The office was created in 1963 to comply with federal and state laws requiring that child abuse be investigated. It is the second largest child welfare agency in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

In 1997, CYF and four other County departments became part of an integrated Department of Human Services. The primary objective of the Department of Human Services is to ensure a coordinated human services system that improves, increases, and promotes services to the County's general public and, in particular, to its most vulnerable populations.

Mission

The mission of CYF is to protect children from abuse and neglect; to preserve families, whenever possible; and to assure permanency, that is, to provide permanent, safe homes for children either by assuring safety within the child's own family, or by finding an adoptive home or another permanent setting for those children who cannot be reunified with their family.

To achieve its mission, CYF has protective services available seven days a week, 24 hours a day (412-473-2000). It maintains professional standards for case work. It strives to provide services that are family-oriented, holistic and well-coordinated. It creates and supports prevention and education programs and activities throughout the County.

Goals

CYF is guided by three goals established by the Commonwealth for all child welfare agencies across Pennsylvania:

- To prevent child abuse, neglect, and exploitation;
- To ensure all abused, neglected or otherwise dependent children are protected from further abuse and neglect in their own or some other permanent home; and
- To provide for the well-being of children in substitute care.

Prevention

DHS strives to prevent child abuse and neglect by helping to support and strengthen families. For example, DHS helps provide many families with "a place to go." Of 33 Family Support Centers in Allegheny County, 25 are funded by DHS. Other examples of DHS-funded programs are: the First Steps program, a voluntary program that mentors new mothers by providing a home visitor for mothers with children from birth through five years of age; Safe Start, that works with parents of young children who have witnessed violence; Early Head Start and Head Start, that prepare parents and children for the school-age years; rental assistance and other housing assistance programs to prevent or shorten homelessness; various food programs that partner with summer and afterschool programs to provide nutritious meals and positive and enriching out-of-school programming for children with high levels of need or risk; and various programs that prepare adults to find and hold a job.

Intervention/Reunification

Conferencing and Teaming

Conferencing and Teaming is the core engagement and decision-making strategy Allegheny County has embraced as part of the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Demonstration Project (also known as the federal Title IV-E Waiver).

If a family is "accepted for services," CYF works with the parent(s) to identify individuals known to the parents who are invested in strengthening the home environment to create a safe home and mitigate the risks of harm to the child. This diverse team (including the parents and case-worker) meets to develop a Family Plan—the services and supports that would be most helpful to the family so that the Plan's agreed-upon outcomes can be achieved. The success of the Family Plan relies on the ongoing involvement of everyone on the team. The ultimate desired outcome of the Family Plan is to strengthen the family so that it can provide a safe and loving home for the children.

Services for Families

DHS is committed to using the right combination of evidence-based practices, promising practices and additional services to make sure each family has access to the kind of assistance they need to ensure positive outcomes for families and achieve safety, permanency and well-being for children. The common assessments—FAST, CANS and ASQ—support this process by identifying each family's strengths and needs. Services include those designed to improve parental skills, parental capabilities, family interactions and children's behavior while promoting safety. In addition, outpatient mental health treatment, home-based family treatment and skill development for parents of young children are available as needed.

Placements and Planning for Permanency

When warranted, in order to ensure the safety of a child and after a pre-placement staffing meeting has been held, CYF will arrange emergency placement for the child with kin — a relative or close family friend — or in foster care or an emergency shelter. Within 48 hours of emergency placement, CYF will go to court to ask a Court of Common Pleas Children's Court judge to make a finding of dependency and authorize the temporary placement of the child. Whenever possible, the child is placed with kin in what is commonly known as "kinship care."

When kinship care is not an option, a foster family, group home or residential treatment center will provide a temporary home for the child.

Concurrently, parents, children and even relative caregivers receive services to help strengthen the family unit to support the reunification of children with their parents. Children who have been removed from parental custody maintain familial relationships through frequent visitation and contact. CYF makes many opportunities for family visits, providing transportation and supervision, when needed, to make evening and weekend family visits possible in the family's home or at sites in the community, rather than in a CYF office.

When a child is in placement, the family's progress toward the goals indicated in their Family Plan is monitored by CYF. At each court hearing concerning a child in placement, each party is represented. The child is represented by a child advocate. The parents may be represented by their own attorney or a parent advocate. CYF is represented by a county solicitor. Sometimes, there may be a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) to gather information for the judge. While CYF and the other parties may make recommendations about permanency options, the Court of Common Pleas Children's Court judges make final decisions about placement as the family progresses toward meeting their goals.

If it is determined by the judge that CYF has made a diligent effort to reunify the family but reunification is not possible, CYF may be ordered by the judge to locate an adoptive home for the child. Counseling services may be offered to both biological and adoptive parents and children. When relatives are committed to their kin, but do not want to adopt, permanent legal custodianship may be pursued. If CYF cannot find a "fit and willing" relative to care for the child, "another living arrangement that is intended to be permanent" must be made.

Children who stay in the custody of CYF past their 16th birthday become eligible for Independent Living Skills Training, based on the assessment of need, to assist with the transition out of CYF care and into independent adulthood.

Community Relations

The Department of Human Services, Office of Community Relations (OCR) devotes much attention to building lines of communication with the public and establishing an environment of openness and accountability between CYF and its various publics, with particular attention focused on the families we serve. Initiated for the Office of Children, Youth and Families in the fall of 1996, and broadened to cover the entire Department of Human Services in 2000, the Department of Human Services established the Director's Action Line (DAL) (1-800-862-6783) to empower people in Allegheny County and provide a means to share concerns about services received by the Department of Human Services program offices or contracted providers.

Published in 1998 — and one of only a handful of such publications across the country — ***A Parent's Handbook*** empowers families from the moment they become involved with CYF by providing them with clear and concise information on their rights and responsibilities, and the responsibilities of CYF and the Courts. To date, approximately 10,000 copies per year have been printed courtesy of Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield, and distributed through DHS to consumers, provider- and community-based agencies and to the public.

Many community partners donate to projects sponsored by DHS or to individuals and families who receive services through DHS program offices. These donors come from the general pub-

lic, area sports and cultural organizations, corporations and businesses, churches, schools, civic and non-profit groups.

Community Involvement

The youth of Allegheny County are also supported by DHS sponsored programs that pick up where traditional governmental funding leaves off. For example, the *DHS Holiday Project* has provided holiday gifts to children receiving services through CYF since 1980. Each year, contributions from public and private donors provide thousands of children, ages birth through 18 years, with gifts. *The Allegheny County Music Festival Fund*, begun in 2000 as cooperative effort between the DHS OCR, Children's Court and Allegheny County Special Events, solicits funds from county residents who attend a county-sponsored outdoor concert, turning the proceeds into requested art, music or sports lessons, memberships to museums, and a wide array of products and services otherwise unattainable, for identified children served in some way by DHS or Juvenile Probation. Since 2003, *Project Prom* offers the public a way to help high school seniors attend their prom in style. Project Prom collects and makes available new and gently used formal attire to any student receiving services through DHS. Eligible students are invited to attend *Project Prom for Gentlemen*, an evening of mentoring, and are assisted with gift cards for tuxedo rentals. Thousands of gowns have been donated to date. The number of young adults taking advantage of this program increases yearly.

Administration

The Department of Human Services, Office of Children, Youth and Families is supervised by the Commonwealth's Dept. of Public Welfare, Office of Children, Youth and Families. The administrative operation of CYF is the responsibility of the DHS deputy director, Office of Children, Youth and Families. CYF is under the authority of the director of the Allegheny County Department of Human Services, the DHS executive deputy director for integrated program services, the Allegheny County manager and county executive.

Office locations

CYF administrative offices are located in the Human Services Building, One Smithfield Street, Suite 400, Pittsburgh, PA 15222. Regional offices are located in and around the City of Pittsburgh.

Child Protection/Intake — 412-473-2000, 400 N Lexington Street, Point Breeze

Central Regional/Intake — 412-350-3600, 1401 Forbes Avenue, Pittsburgh

East Regional — 412-473-1100, 400 N. Lexington Street, Point Breeze

Mon Valley Regional/Intake — 412-664-8900, 332 Fifth Avenue, McKeesport

North Regional/Intake — 412-323-6100, 1972 Clayton Avenue, Pittsburgh (North Side)

South Regional/Intake — 412-488-8500, 2100 Wharton Street, Pittsburgh (South Side)

Adoption — 412-473-2300, 400 N. Lexington Street, Point Breeze

Foster Care — 412-473-2400, 400 N. Lexington Street, Point Breeze